

CHAPTER 58 EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

PREAMBLE

This chapter implements the emergency assistance program which is designed to assist families who face homelessness or other types of emergencies. The purpose of the program is to provide financial assistance on behalf of a needy child or children and any other members of the household to meet needs that have been caused by an emergency situation and that they are unable to fulfill. The program provides a means to deal with financial situations that are threatening the health and well-being of an eligible family. It is intended to meet an immediate need which would not otherwise be met. Assistance shall not be denied even if the assistance payment will provide only a temporary resolution to an ongoing problem.

DIVISION I FAMILY INVESTMENT PROGRAM—CONTROL GROUP [Rescinded IAB 2/12/97, effective 3/1/97]

441—58.1 to 58.20 Reserved.

DIVISION II FAMILY INVESTMENT PROGRAM—TREATMENT GROUP [Prior to 10/13/93, 441—58.1 to 58.11]

441—58.21(234) Definitions.

“*Child*” means a person under age 18 who has not reached majority through marriage. Emergency assistance shall continue through the month in which the child turns 18. “*Child*” also means a person aged 18 who is a full-time student in a secondary school or in the equivalent level of vocational or technical training, who is expected to complete the program before reaching 19 and who has not reached majority through marriage. Emergency assistance shall continue through the month in which school or training is completed. In those cases in which the child reaches 19 in the same month as the child completes school or training, emergency assistance shall continue through the month of the child’s nineteenth birthday.

“*Destitution*” means lack of shelter because of an emergency situation.

“*Emergency*” means, for the purposes of this program, a situation that threatens the family’s living arrangements or will result in destitution unless immediate financial assistance is provided.

“*Homelessness*” means the lack of a fixed and regular nighttime residence or a residence which is:

1. A supervised shelter designed to provide temporary accommodations (such as a welfare hotel or congregate shelter).
2. A halfway house or similar institution that provides temporary residence for persons intended to be institutionalized.
3. A temporary accommodation in the residence of another person.
4. A place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings (a hallway, a bus station, a lobby or similar places).

“*Household*” means, for the purposes of determining income, resources and household size, the following persons living in the household. The:

1. Applicant.
2. Applicant’s legal or common-law spouse.
3. Applicant’s child(ren).
4. Legal or biological parent of the child(ren).

5. Applicant's child(ren)'s sibling(s) of whole or half blood or adoptive.

6. Applicant and any child under the care of the applicant when the applicant meets the definition of "relative" as defined at 441—paragraph 41.22(3)"a."

Persons temporarily not living with the household at the time of the interview shall not be considered members of the household.

441—58.22(234) General provisions. Emergency assistance is available to families with children (including migrant families), who are faced with a crisis situation causing a threat to the families' living arrangements. Emergency assistance is also available to children who are living on their own but who have been living, within the six months prior to applying for the program, with a relative as defined at 441—paragraph 41.22(3)"a," provided an emergency exists. The program is operated state-wide and is funded on a fiscal-year basis (from July through June). When funds are expended prior to the end of the fiscal year, the program will be discontinued until funding is received for the next fiscal year in accordance with rule 441—58.30(234). Emergency assistance is not intended as a substitute for regular assistance grants from an ongoing program but is intended to be the program of last resort when no other sources of assistance are available. Emergency assistance shall also be provided for that portion of an emergency need not covered by benefits from other programs due to those programs' limitations.

441—58.23(234) Application procedures.

58.23(1) Date of application. The date of application shall be determined by the date a signed Form 470-2762, Emergency Assistance Application, is received in any local office or department-designated site. When an application is delivered to a closed office, it will be considered received on the first day that is not a weekend or state holiday following the day that the office was last open. To be considered valid, the application must contain a legible name and address and must be signed.

a. The emergency assistance case record must contain a completed application for each 30-day eligibility period. Whenever an initial application is denied, withdrawn, or more than 30 days old, the household shall be required to complete a new application form.

b. At least one face-to-face interview shall be conducted before approval of the application. The face-to-face interview may be held in the county office, at a department-designated site, or in the applicant's home.

(1) The applicant may appoint an authorized representative to attend the interview if the applicant is unable to attend. The authorized representative must be a person knowledgeable of the household's circumstances.

(2) If the applicant or authorized representative fails to attend the required interview, the application shall be denied.

(3) When it is impossible to hold a face-to-face interview within the ten-day time frame for processing applications as described at 58.23(2), the county office or department designee may waive the face-to-face interview and hold a telephone conference instead.

c. The household's declaration shall be accepted except when verification is required by these rules or information appears questionable. The decision with respect to eligibility shall be based largely on information provided by the household.

58.23(2) Time limits. Applications shall be processed within ten calendar days from the date of receipt to resolve the household's emergency. The ten-day time standard for approval shall apply except in unusual circumstances, such as when the department and the household have made every reasonable effort to secure necessary information which has not been supplied by the date the time limit expires; or because of emergency situations, such as fire, flood or other conditions beyond the administrative control of the department.

58.23(3) *Additional information required.* When additional information or verification is required, the household shall be requested in writing to provide that information within five calendar days. The written request shall also inform the household that failure to provide the required information within five calendar days or failure to authorize the local office to secure the information from other sources will result in denial of the application. The five-day period begins the day after the date the local office issues the written request.

The five-day time limit to provide additional information shall be extended if the household is unable to obtain the information by the requested date due to circumstances beyond the household's control, such as illness, or the source who is to provide the verification causes a delay, or due to emergencies like fire, flood, etc.

58.23(4) *Basis for decision on application.* The decision with respect to eligibility for emergency assistance shall be made based on the household's circumstances as they exist on the date of the interview.

58.23(5) *Subsequent requests for assistance.* Except for verifying that an emergency exists and applying for benefits from LIHEAP, general relief, or veterans affairs, the household is not required to reverify eligibility factors for approval of additional emergency assistance payment requests made within the 30-day authorization period. The time limits for processing additional requests for assistance remain the same as initial requests.

441—58.24(234) *Eligibility requirements.* A household, including a migrant household, shall be eligible for emergency assistance when the following conditions are met:

58.24(1) *Existence of an emergency.* An emergency shall exist, limited to eviction, foreclosure, utility shutoff, fuel shortage, loss of heating energy supply or equipment, or homelessness. An emergency does not exist for gas or electricity shutoff when a household is approved for LIHEAP and is protected by the moratorium on disconnection between November 1 and March 31.

a. An emergency also exists when there is a potential for eviction, foreclosure, utility shutoff, fuel shortage, loss of heating energy supply or equipment, or homelessness. For a household to qualify for emergency assistance, the potential emergency shall be expected to happen within the month of application or the following month.

b. The household shall be required to provide proof that an emergency exists. Acceptable verification includes, but is not limited to:

- (1) An eviction notice.
- (2) A foreclosure notice.
- (3) A utility shutoff notice.

(4) A written statement to verify homelessness from the party or shelter where the household is staying.

- (5) Other written documentation, as needed.

c. If the amount necessary to resolve the emergency exceeds the \$500 maximum payment of the emergency assistance program, the applicant must be able to verify the ability to pay the difference from other resources, or the emergency assistance application shall be denied.

58.24(2) *Income and resources.* The household's available income and resources shall be within the limits as defined at rules 441—58.26(234) and 441—58.27(234).

58.24(3) *Receipt of assistance.* The household shall not have received assistance in Iowa from the program within one year prior to the date the first payment is authorized. The 12-month period begins on the date the first payment is approved. If any household member received emergency assistance within the past 12 months, the entire household is ineligible.

58.24(4) *Child in household.* The household shall contain at least one child who is living with the household.

58.24(5) *Child in need.* To be considered in need, the child shall be destitute or be without living arrangements unless assistance is provided.

a. The child is not in destitution or need if a member of the household (including the child aged 16 or older, who is not attending elementary, secondary or the equivalent level of vocational or technical school full-time) without identified problems with participation of a temporary or incidental nature as described at rule 441—93.133(239B) or barriers to participation as described at rule 441—93.134(239B), in the 30 days before application or subsequent request for emergency assistance:

- (1) Refused a job offer or training for employment.
- (2) Was dismissed from a job due to the member's own actions which meet the definition of "misconduct" in rule 441—93.132(239B).
- (3) Quit employment.
- (4) Reduced earnings.
- (5) Began participation in a strike.
- (6) Chose a limited benefit plan.

b. The 30-day period of ineligibility shall begin the day after the household member reduced earnings and was dismissed from a job.

(1) When a member quits a job, participates in a strike, or refuses employment, each day the job or offer for employment remains available or the household member participates in a strike is considered a day of job refusal. In these situations, the 30-day period of ineligibility shall begin the day the person returns to the job or accepts the job offer or the day after the job or offer for employment is no longer available.

(2) When a person chooses a first limited benefit plan, each day the person fails to reconsider by contacting IM or PROMISE JOBS counts as a day of refusal. The day the person reconsiders begins the 30-day period of ineligibility. When a person chooses a subsequent limited benefit plan, the 30-day ineligibility period shall begin the day after the date on the notice of decision establishing the person's limited benefit plan.

c. Whenever the household is determined to have good cause for refusing employment, quitting employment, or reducing earnings for the family investment program, no further determination is required for the emergency assistance program. Verification of the circumstances resulting in refusal, loss, or reduction of employment is not required unless information provided appears questionable.

58.24(6) *Application for other benefits.* The household shall apply for and accept benefits for which the household may be qualified from the energy assistance, county general relief and veteran's affairs programs before approval for emergency assistance.

a. Verification that the household has met the requirements of first seeking assistance from these programs shall be documented on Form 470-2804, Disposition of Application for Other Benefits. A separate form shall be completed for each program to which the applicant is referred.

b. Emergency assistance benefits shall not be approved while an application for other benefits is pending.

c. If a household is denied general relief within 30 days before emergency assistance application, and the denial was due to failure to work off past general relief assistance, emergency assistance shall also be denied.

58.24(7) *Citizenship and alienage.* The household shall contain at least one child who meets citizenship and alienage requirements as defined at 441—subrule 41.23(5). The household shall verify the alien status of at least one child to determine if the household contains an eligible child. There is no need to reverify the alien status unless it is subject to change.

58.24(8) *Utility service connection.* Applicants shall provide verification from the utility company that all requirements to provide service have been met before payment to the utility company for utility deposits for new or reconnected service will be approved. When a household applies for emergency assistance due to a disconnect notice, the household must provide verification from the utility company that the applicant either has signed a payment plan or is not eligible for a payment plan. Failure to provide this verification shall result in denial of the emergency assistance application.

441—58.25(234) *Determination of need.* Needs covered are limited to rent payments, house payments (including property taxes and homeowner's insurance if included in the house payment), rent and utility deposits, utilities, and purchase, repair, or rental of heating equipment. Utilities shall include heat (electric, gas, fuel oil, wood, etc.), lights, water, sewer, and garbage, but shall not include telephone. Heating equipment shall include, but is not limited to, furnace, space heater, kerosene heater, wood stove, etc. Air conditioners shall not be funded.

441—58.26(234) *Income.* The household's nonexempt gross income, with the exception of the deductions specified at subrule 58.26(2), shall not exceed 100 percent of the poverty level of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). Changes in OMB's poverty guidelines shall go into effect the second month after the changes are published. When determining income and household size, the household shall be determined as defined in rule 441—58.21(234). All income reported by the household shall be verified.

58.26(1) *Income considered.* Income considered shall include, but is not limited to, all gross income received or reasonably anticipated to be received by the household in the month of application, such as the family investment program (FIP) grant, veteran's pension, social security benefits, supplemental security income (SSI), job insurance benefits, child support income, alimony, workers' compensation benefits, cash payments from any of the DHS diversion programs, adoption subsidies, foster care payments, retroactive payments from any source, lump-sum income, earnings from on-the-job training, work-study income, income tax refunds (if received in the month of application), loans and grants available for living expenses (including unprorated gross educational moneys received in the month of application that are not earmarked), interest income (if received in the month of application), maintenance payments, Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA) payments, gifts, refunds from rental and utility deposits, earned income credit, self-employment income (net profit expected to be received in the month of application, not annualized), earnings from employment, and earnings of a child aged 16 or over who is not attending elementary, secondary or the equivalent of vocational or technical school full-time. The following deductions shall be allowed from earned income:

a. The actual, verified amount of employment-related, nonreimbursed child care expenses incurred or reasonably expected to be incurred in the month of application. A child care deduction shall also be allowed for VISTA volunteers.

b. Allowable business expenses in a self-employment enterprise, as defined at 441—subrule 41.27(2).

58.26(2) Exempt income. Exempt income shall include reimbursements; earned as well as unearned income in-kind; vendor payments; earnings of a child under age 16, or age 16 or older, if the child is attending elementary, secondary or the equivalent level of vocational or technical training school full-time; training allowances designated for a specific purpose (such as those issued by the Workforce Investment Act, PROMISE JOBS, Vocational Rehabilitation Services, Food Stamp Employment and Training program, etc.); that amount of the lump sum expended for legal, medical or burial expenses; and legally obligated moneys. Legally obligated money means money that is otherwise payable to the household, but which is diverted by the provider of the payment to a third party for a household expense without the household's consent. Examples of legally obligated moneys are the amount withheld from job insurance benefits to recover an overpayment or for child support for a child not living with the household; or the amount of child support withheld from earnings for a child not living with the household.

58.26(3) Exempt as income and resources. Deposits into an individual development account (IDA) are exempt. The amount of the deposit is exempt as income and shall not be used in the 100 percent of poverty level eligibility test. The deposit must be deducted from nonexempt earned and unearned income that the client receives in the month of application, provided the deposit is made in the month of application. To allow a deduction, verification of the deposit must be provided within five calendar days as described in subrule 58.23(3). The client shall be allowed a deduction only when the deposit is made from the client's money. The earned income deductions described in 58.26(1) "a" and "b" shall be applied to earnings from employment or net profit from self-employment that remains after deducting the amount deposited into the account. If the client has both earned and unearned income, the amount deposited into the IDA shall first be deducted from the client's nonexempt unearned income. Deposits shall not be deducted from earned or unearned income that is exempt.

441—58.27(234) Resources. The household's liquid resources shall not exceed \$1000. Liquid resources are limited to cash on hand, money in checking, savings or credit union accounts, and savings certificates, with the following exceptions: The balance in an individual development account (IDA), including interest earned on the IDA, is exempt as a resource. Income in any given month is not counted as a resource in the same month. When liquid resources are owned by more than one person, unless otherwise established, it is assumed that all persons hold equal shares in the resources. When determining countable resources, the household shall be determined as defined in rule 441—58.21(234). All other resources are exempt. The household's declaration of the amount of liquid resources shall be accepted unless the declaration appears questionable or the amount declared is close to the resource limitation. The household is not required to apply its available resources toward the emergency as long as the resources are within the prescribed limits.

441—58.28(234) Payment.

58.28(1) Maximum payment. The maximum payment shall not exceed \$500 per authorization period. This amount can be applied to a single need or to several needs, not to exceed the maximum amount. Payment shall be issued in the amount of the need, not to exceed \$500. When the emergency need is greater than \$500 (or more than the maximum amount still available to the applicant, if a subsequent request is being made), emergency assistance shall be approved only when the applicant provides verification that either:

- a. The vendor will accept payment of up to \$500 (or the maximum amount available) to resolve the emergency, or
- b. Another source will supply the amount needed over and above the emergency assistance payment amount.

58.28(2) Vendor payment. Payment shall be issued directly to the vendor in form of a state warrant unless the vendor is a state employee.

a. Vendors shall be required to complete Form 470-2781, Approval for Vendor Payment, before payment shall be issued. The vendor shall provide a copy of IRS Form W-9, Request for Taxpayer Identification Number and Certification, if necessary, to resolve vendor name or vendor number discrepancies.

b. Form 470-2781 shall also be used to notify the vendor of the amount approved for payment. Payment is owed to the vendor in the amount approved on Form 470-2781 even if emergency assistance funds are exhausted or emergency assistance eligibility is found not to exist when system entries are made. If the household provides verification of an emergency item and the cost of the item on another document, there is no need to send Form 470-2781 to the vendor to reverify the information.

c. Payment to state employees shall be made as follows:

(1) If the emergency assistance payment is for a service, such as furnace repair, the payment is included in the vendor's regular state paycheck as extra pay.

(2) If the emergency assistance payment is for goods, such as rent, rent deposit, or purchase of heating equipment, payment to the vendor is processed in the form of a travel voucher.

58.28(3) Authorization period. The authorization period is limited to a period of 30 consecutive days in a 12-month period, and payment shall be approved if the request is received within that period. The 30-day authorization period begins on the date the first emergency assistance payment is approved for an eligible household. The household may be eligible for more than one payment as long as the total amount of all payments does not exceed the maximum amount and all requests for additional payments are received within the period of 30 consecutive days. Any portion of the maximum payment amount not used in the 30-day authorization period cannot be carried forward to a future authorization period.

58.28(4) Returned warrants and donations to emergency assistance. Any refunds of emergency assistance money shall be returned to the DHS county office. Returned funds shall be deposited back into the emergency assistance account.

a. When an emergency assistance client or vendor returns the emergency assistance warrant or returns an emergency assistance payment in the form of a money order, personal check, or cash, the county office shall accept the repayment and complete Form 470-0009, Official Receipt.

b. The department may receive refunds of rent deposits that were paid on behalf of emergency assistance clients by a combination of assistance from the emergency assistance program and other persons or organizations.

c. Donations shall be handled in the same manner as refunds and shall be deposited into the emergency assistance account.

58.28(5) Misdirected warrants. Replacement of an emergency assistance warrant does not apply when the warrant is inadvertently delivered to the emergency assistance client rather than the vendor, and the client endorses it with the client's own name and cashes it. This is not an overpayment, because the warrant is issued on behalf of the same client who cashed it. It is up to the vendor to pursue the matter with the post office, the place of business that cashed the warrant, or the client and to work out possible repayment arrangements.

441—58.29(234) Notification and appeals. All emergency assistance households shall be given notice with respect to the decision on their application for assistance in accordance with 441—subrule 7.7(1). Households have the right to appeal the department's decision in accordance with rule 441—7.5(17A).

441—58.30(234) Discontinuance of the emergency assistance program. The program shall be discontinued when funds have been exhausted. To ensure equitable treatment, applications for emergency assistance shall be approved on a first-come, first-served basis until all funds have been depleted. First-come, first-served is determined by the date the application is approved for payment and entered into the emergency assistance computer system.

58.30(1) Partial payment. Because funds are limited, applications may be approved for less than the amount requested. Payment cannot be approved beyond the amount of funds available.

58.30(2) Reserved funds. A portion of yearly emergency assistance funds shall be reserved for final appeal decisions reversing the department's denial that are received after funds for the program have run out.

58.30(3) Untimely applications. Emergency assistance applications received after the program is discontinued for the year and more than five working days before the program begins again the next year shall be denied.

441—58.31(234) Special information received from emergency assistance clients. Rescinded IAB 10/2/02, effective 10/1/02.

These rules are intended to implement Iowa Code section 234.6.

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CHAPTER 59

UNEMPLOYED PARENT WORKFARE PROGRAM

[Prior to 7/1/83, Social Services[770] Ch 59]

Rescinded, effective 7/1/89; see 441—Chapter 93